

## THE ROLE OF AWARENESS IN THE MEASUREMENT OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

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In the linguistic tradition of attitude research, awareness has always been considered a key concept (Kristiansen 2010). Many linguists distinguish between overt/public/conscious and covert/private/unconscious attitudes. Language users are assumed to be aware of the former, while potentially unaware of the latter. These unconscious attitudes are traditionally probed using indirect methods like the matched-guise technique in which researchers make sure participants are unaware of the fact that they are eliciting language attitudes. Recently, however, language attitude research has adopted a new strand of attitude measures which have been developed in the field of social psychology (e.g. Speelman et al. 2013; Campbell-Kibler 2012). These new methods aim to measure *implicit* attitudes as opposed to *explicit* attitudes. Contrary to the linguistic emphasis on awareness, the social psychological concept of implicitness goes beyond this single feature of awareness and includes aspects like controllability, resource-dependence and intentionality. In this paper, we reflect on the potential of a re-evaluation of the concept of awareness in language attitudes research in the context of a study introducing one of those novel social psychological implicit attitude measures, the Relational Responding Taks (RRT, De Houwer et al. 2015), to sociolinguistics.

In our study, we investigate attitudes towards two varieties of Dutch, Standard Belgian Dutch (SBD) and Colloquial Belgian Dutch (CBD), in a sample of Flemish students. Previous research has suggested that the former variety enjoys prestige associations, while the latter is perceived as dynamic and trendy (e.g. Impe & Speelman 2007; Grondelaers & Speelman 2013). Some of those studies have emphasized that the dynamism attitudes towards CBD are strictly situated at a level of unconsciousness (Grondelaers & Speelman 2013). We use the RRT to check whether we can also measure these dynamism associations at the level of implicitness, where unawareness is replaced by uncontrollability and unintentionality. Additionally, a traditional questionnaire was used to probe the same attitudes at the explicit level, i.e. with respondents fully aware and in control of the expression of their attitudes. Results confirm prestige attitudes towards SBD and dynamism associations with CBD, both on the implicit, and the explicit level.

## References

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